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American Embassy, Guatemala

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POLITICAL

Dispatch	IRC-10 RM/R-2 REP-2 ARA 4 ICA-10
Rec'd	11/8/57 ASIA-10 OSD-2 Army-35 Navy-23 Air-24

1. Attempts to Form Anti-Communist Coalition

Attempts are being made by General Ydigoras on the one hand and by a part of the group which supported Ortiz Passarelli in the past elections on the other hand to form anti-communist coalitions. Representatives of Ydigoras met with the other group during the week but withdrew after it became clear that the latter group was unwilling to accept Ydigoras as the coalition candidate. (U/OL)

Comment: Ortiz Passarelli has expressed his intention to run again but it is doubtful if his former backers will renominate him unless the elections are scheduled this month, in which case they would have no other choice. Present indications are that the MDN will try to put on a new face and use its machinery, much of which is still intact, to back a military candidate who will have official support. The present leaders of the MDN will fade into the background and an attempt will be made to disguise the fact that the Government is behind their candidate. At the same time the MDN will try to form a coalition with other parties as it did in the last elections. The leading candidates for this coalition are Cruz Salazar and Peralta and a survey of Army officers is in progress designed to determine which has the greater acceptability. Meanwhile, the Ydigoristas are determined to go ahead on their own and there are indications that other anti-communist candidates such as Juan Cordova Cerna, Miguel Asturias Quiñonez and Enrique Ardon may also enter the lists. The danger is that the anti-communist forces will be so badly split that none of them will be able to beat the PR candidate. (CONFIDENTIAL)

2. New Election Date Probably January 19

Congress today (November 5) referred to committee a motion which would set January 19 as the date for new presidential elections. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Comment: General Ydigoras has insisted that the Constitution and the Electoral Law require elections no later than November but all other parties, particularly the Partido Revolucionario, favor a later date. It seems likely that Congress will [illegible] date for January 19. (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

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3. Congressional Elections Not Yet Annulled

Congress did not annul the congressional elections of October 20. It passed to the Electoral Tribunal the responsibility for making a determination. To date the Electoral Tribunal has stated only that it has a great deal of paper to wade through and its decision can not be hurried. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Comment: The Electoral Tribunal is expected to annul the Congressional elections since the public believes they suffered from the same irregularities as did the presidential elections. Moreover, there is considerable public sentiment in favor of letting the PR have an opportunity to elect some deputies. (CONFIDENTIAL)

4. New Government Considering Liberalized Policy in Exiles

The Association of University Students (AEU) has announced that President Flores Avendaño has agreed that 16 students who were exiled following the disturbances of June, 1956 will be granted visas to return to Guatemala. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Comment: This action is indicative of the liberal cast of the present government, which feels that the policy of past governments with respect to exiles has been unduly restrictive. The Minister of Interior is now reviewing the cases of Guatemala's 700 exiles to see which ones should be permitted to return. He has privately expressed a desire to keep out the communists. (CONFIDENTIAL)

5. Legal Action Against Ortiz for Misuse of Public Funds

During the week Guillermo Davila Cordova, in his capacity as Secretary General of the Ydigoras Redención party, filed with the Supreme Court (and two days later withdrew) a preliminary complaint against Ortiz Passarelli for complicity in the misuse of public funds. The complaint alleged that hundreds of thousands of taxpayers' quetzales were illegally diverted into the Ortiz campaign. It cited in particular the $40,000 allegedly delivered to Ortiz from confidential funds by former Interior Minister Rodriguez Genis and offered in evidence a photostat of a receipt allegedly bearing Ortiz' signature. Ortiz denounced the action as politically motivated and stated that he would make adequate defense, possibly with a counter-suit for defamation, at the appropriate time. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Comment: The Embassy has it on good authority that the receipt in question was genuine and was signed by Ortiz as claimed. However, the original was destroyed and it is unlikely that Redención could have proved its allegations in court. Davila is reported to have withdrawn the complaint because of DI threats that a suit would be lodged against Ydigoras for subverting the public order. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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6. Supreme Court Answers El Derecho

The law students' association, El Derecho, publicly demanded the "immediate and irrevocable resignation" of the members of the Supreme Court for being "accomplices in the violations of human rights committed by the Gonzalez Lopez government." The Supreme Court immediately issued a statement rejecting El Derecho's demands as being politically motivated. It defended itself as non-political and its decisions as hewing to the law. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Comment: El Derecho's complaint is consistent with its extreme leftist orientation. There is evidence that some of the other faculties are becoming fed up with the law students' excessiveness. Communist influence in the University is greatest in the Schools of Law and Humanities. (CONFIDENTIAL)

7. Investigation of Castillo's Assassination Continues

The Attorney General has taken action to obtain a two weeks' extension beyond the usual period allowed by law for the investigation into the circumstances surrounding the assassination of President Castillo. He has stated that the presence of Col. Enrique Trinidad Oliva in the Presidential Palace at the time of the assassination is significant, not having been known originally, and he has expressed the hope that Col. Oliva can be brought back from Nicaragua to testify concerning his knowledge of the crime. The Attorney General states that "sensational" facts are being developed. A new study of the diary of the assassin has been proposed and during the past week publicity was also given to the fact that a "close friend" of President Castillo, divorcée Gloria Bolaños, had taken asylum in the Dominican Republic. The newspaper which reported this, Prensa Libre, conjectured that Miss Bolaños had taken asylum and had fled in order to avoid questioning with respect to her knowledge of Castillo's assassination. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Comment: The public is now more convinced than ever that it has yet to learn the full and true story of President Castillo's death. (UNCLASSIFIED)

MILITARY

Negative.

FOR THE AMBASSADOR:

William B. Connett, Jr.
First Secretary

Contributors:
TJKuyle/WLConnett

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